

# India Now

April, 1981

Monthly News Publication of Indian People's  
Association in North America (IPANA)

This PDF is prepared by Sukhwant Hundal in memory of his father  
Shivdev S. Hundal and mother Harbans Kaur Hundal.

Source: Sukhwant Hundal's personal collections



## Progressive Historian under Attack in Aligarh

Aligarh Muslim University was closed indefinitely on January 31 following growing tension and a week-long gherao of the Vice-Chancellor. As of early March, there was no indication as to when the university would reopen.

At the center of the storm on the 18,000-student campus is Irfan Habib, history professor, Marxist and, since last June, the dean of social sciences. A section of the students wants him out. The reasons have to do with his views on discipline and academic standards as well as his political and social views.

At the age of 50, Habib is a famous historian who has done breakthrough work in agrarian conditions during the

Mughul period, about the prospects for independent economic development of India if the British had not come, and a number of other theoretical questions. He has been teaching at AMU for the past 27 years.

### ACADEMIC SICKNESS

During this time, conditions at AMU have deteriorated as they have at most colleges and universities in India. Corruption is rampant at all levels, from faculty appointments and promotions down to honesty in examinations. While most students want to take their education seriously, some criminal elements have been able to gain control of student politics. An

important student leader against Habib is Manzar Safi, who has been criminally charged, but has found shelter in the campus. The then Vice-Chancellor, A.M. Khusro, admitted him two months before the 1977-78 session without even an official application.

When it comes to examinations, any number of examinations are given to enable some students to get through. Cheating is tolerated. Two of

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## Foreign Students in Quebec Face Another Tuition Hike

Michel Brunet, Director of the Services for the Ministry of Education, Quebec, announced another hike in tuition fees to be paid by foreign students effective September 1981. This announcement not only shocked foreign students but also caused a stir among academic circles.

The fee increase will require new foreign students to pay \$4,128 for two semesters and returning students \$2,500 during the academic year 1981-82. For the following year, returning students will have to pay \$3,500, a further increase of \$1,000. In con-

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## Canadian Farmworkers Union Holds National Convention

Our Vancouver Correspondent

The Canadian Farmworkers Union, concluding its first year with over 1,000 members, three union certifications, and one signed agreement, is gearing up for a militant organizing drive in the Fraser Valley in British Columbia during the coming year. The union will also begin an organizing drive in the Okanagan.

This was made public on March 29 at the conclusion of the union's three-day convention. Addressing a public rally, CFU President Raj Chouhan said 1981 will be "a tough year for the CFU."

He told an enthusiastic crowd of about 250 farmworkers at Moberley School that CFU will "go all out" this year in organizing Fraser Valley farmworkers. "If we have to have strikes in the fields, we will have strikes; if we have to set up picket lines, we will keep farmworkers out and growers shut down; if we have to have boycotts of products, we will have boycotts," said Chouhan.

Earlier, approximately 20 delegates representing Fraser Valley, Okanagan and Ontario farmworkers met at Douglas

College at the union's first national convention since its formation last April.

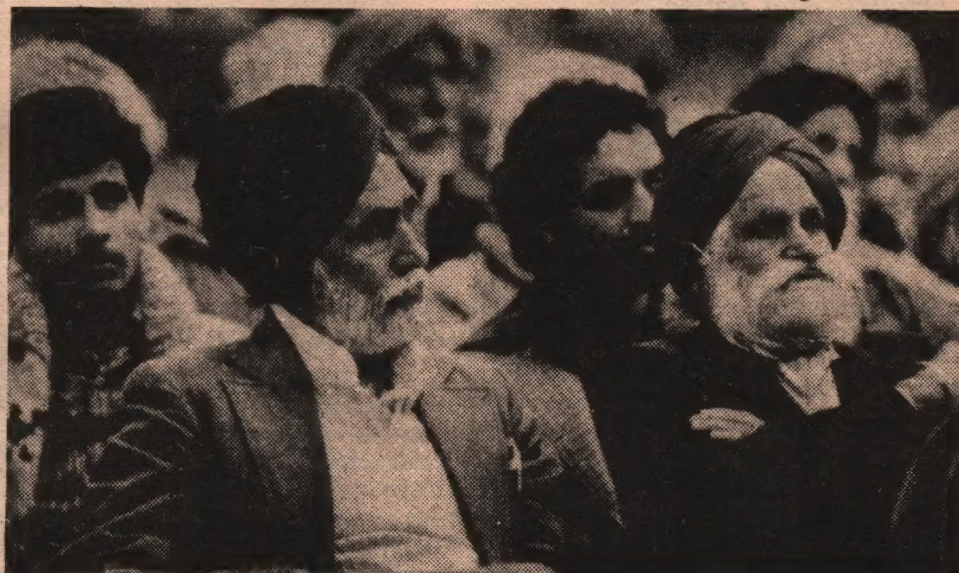
### RESOLUTIONS

The convention adopted a number of constitutional and policy resolutions. The convention decided to set up a hiring hall and a transportation system for farmworkers in the Fraser Valley. CFU President Raj Chouhan said that the only way to put an end to the contract system is to set up a union hiring hall.

The CFU convention demanded that the government take concrete steps to improve the housing situation for farmworkers. The convention also demanded that the BC government introduce legislation to force employers to provide free day-care facilities for farmworkers' children.

The convention denounced BC's Socrad government for excluding farmworkers from the Employment Standards Act

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Audience at union session listens to plans for 1981 season.

## Mangal Pandey: First Martyr of 1857

"Both the nature and causes of the Mutiny are still a subject of lively dispute. It has been considered, and not only by Indian historians, as a national rising and even as 'the first war of independence'." These are the opening lines of the chapter titled Mutiny in the Oxford History of India. Absurd and annoying as it may seem, these lines are indicative of the British strategy that to rule another country, it is imperative to

destroy and malign its history, culture and language.

No wonder then that many, even Indians, are not proud of that glorious page in our history - 1857, the year of the First War of Independence. What other name can be given to the events of 1857 which aimed at one thing - to get our country rid of the Firangees - that ruthless bunch which ruled India in the name of the crown - the Georges and the Victorias.

Mangal Pandey was the first martyr of the First War of Independence.



MANGAL PANDAY

He was a soldier in the 34th regiment stationed at Barrackpore in Bengal. Like soldiers in other regiments and his own comrades in the 34th regiment, he was ready to participate in the freedom struggle on the planned day. But certain events forced him to plunge into battle sooner than planned.

On January 22, 1857, the ammunition store of the 34th regiment was secretly set on fire. Soldiers of the 19th regiment stationed at Bahrampur in Morshidabad district of

(continued on p.12)



# 100,000 Peasants Rally in Patna

Nearly 100,000 peasants from all over Bihar demonstrated in Patna on February 23. Organized by the Bihar Pradesh Kisan Sabha, peasants came from different districts. It is believed that this was the largest peasant rally in Bihar in the last ten years.

A unique feature of the rally was that 90% of the participants were landless or land-poor. This was in contrast to other rallies held in New Delhi under the leadership of Indira Gandhi or Charan Singh, which were dominated by tractor- and jeep-owning farmers.

Peasants assembled in Patna the day before the planned rally. On February 22 and 23, the city of Patna looked like a huge village.

In the afternoon, the demonstration began. As it reached the Secretariat, it was stopped by the authorities who proposed that only leaders should proceed further to meet government officials. The demonstrators, however, refused and demanded that the officials come to the rally to receive the charter of demands.

Ultimately, a government

representative came to meet the demonstrators who presented a memorandum of demands.

The demands include implementation of Bihar's land ceiling act, Bihar Tenancy Act, Minimum Wages Act, distribution of surplus land among landless and landpoor peasants, cancellation of debts of peasants with less than 15 acres of irrigated land or 25 acres of unirrigated land, and supply of diesel, fertilizer, seeds, etc., at concessional rates.

Also included in the demands were occupancy rights to hutment dwellers on non-vested land and the right of peasant organizations to fix the price of agricultural produce.

Demands relating to the urban poor and students as well as cancellation of unequal treaties with foreign countries were raised.

That night, a cultural performance consisting of songs, music and drama was presented by the Democratic Cultural Front and other groups.

(based on a report in Lal Jhanda)

# Police Involved in Gang Warfare in Bihar

NEERJA CHOWDHURY

Amaiya. It is a name that has become synonymous with violence. An interior village tucked away in Monghyr district of Bihar, it is the core of a group of villages in Tarapur block where 77 murders have taken place in one year. Gangs operate freely. There are at least two train robberies every month between Bhagalpur and Jamalpur. Buses are stopped by dacoits at gunpoint, its passengers pulled out and looted, young women molested or raped.

From Barain, considered a model of Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan movement 20 years ago, it is a three-mile walk to Amaiya. The village is divided into two halves with very little movement in between. On the northern side live 15 Rajput families and 30 Yadav families. They are backed by the gang of Ganesh Singh, a Rajput, who with his brother, Naresh Singh, owns about 45 bighas of land. On the other side of the village live 100 Koiree families who seek the support of Shivdhari's gang. Being vulnerable, the Harijans are neutral.

Maithili Brahmins, Bhumihars and Rajputs came to Monghyr about 70 years ago from north Bihar and UP. Soon they became big landowners. The local population, largely Yadavs and Koirees, resented their domination. After zamindari abolition, these intermediate castes have been able to acquire land and assert themselves.

Clashes between Rajputs and Yadavs are taking place all over Bihar. But in Monghyr district, the conflict is between Yadavs and Koirees. In Amaiya, Koirees have been sharecroppers on Yadav-owned land.

Arms are freely available in the area. They are smuggled out of the arms factory in Monghyr with ease. Moreover, there are private workshops making arms. It has become a cottage industry.

## POLICE

Though a special police picket is posted in Amaiya, the situation has not improved. The police has not only failed to curb crime but has itself got involved in crime. It was astonishing to see Naresh Singh, with many warrants against him, holding court in his house regardless of the police chowki nearby. "The

police hobnobs with him," say the frightened villagers. Some police stations are known to be in the pay of criminals. Gambling, drinking, prostitution, dacoity and murder are sources of income for them, so there is little incentive to stop crime. But political involvement is the biggest factor in the growth of the evil. Both Naresh Singh and Shivdhari enjoy political protection.

Absence of police help and the growing insecurity have forced people to look increasingly to the gangs themselves for protection. A criminal in Bihar is no longer just a criminal. He has a place in politics.

## POLITICAL PARTIES

The people of Amaiya have sought the help of their MLA, a Yadav, who won on the CPI ticket. But he prefers to salute the village from a distance. The previous MLA, belonging to Raj Narain's group, had bailed out Ganesh Singh from jail. Since Ganesh Singh decided to back CPI, Congress(I) put up a Koiree and got Shivdhari's help.

## ECONOMIC CAUSES

The economic conflict adds another dimension. Growing unemployment generates its own tensions. At one time the area was considered a rice bowl. The traders used to buy paddy from the farmers and get it dehusked by "dheki" owners. It was then sent by bullock carts to various villages. Involved in this chain of employment were 13,000 people in nearby Asargunj town alone. But "dhekis" were replaced by rice mills set up by the traders, rendering the "dheki"-owners jobless. Trucks replaced bullock carts for transporting rice.

The overt violence of course calls for urgent action. But the social injustice, growing economic disparities, caste tensions, and political corruption, which form the roots of this violence, also have to be faced squarely.

(abridged from the Indian Express)

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## Big Money in Illegal Mining

According to some estimates, coal worth at least Rs 200,000 is smuggled out of Giridih and adjoining areas of the Bihar coal belt every day; 75,000 to 100,000 tons of coal are extracted every month through illicit mining. Engaged in this operation are police and coal officials and contractors with powerful political links backed by the denizens of the underworld.

In Giridih district alone, there are at least 20 powerful gangsters engaged in illicit mining and coal smuggling. One of the most powerful is an office-bearer of Congress(I) who enjoys the patronage of several Bihar ministers. His area of operations includes the Serampur, Bhadua, Chakobad and Judakiti abandoned mines in Giridih district.

According to coal experts, the abandoned mines contain not less than five to six million tons of grade one coal needed for steel production. A knowledgeable source, according to the Hindu, says: "There is big money involved in the flourishing racket: these and other such mines in Giridih district have been abandoned precisely to promote illegal mining by contractors, coal officials and police."

## ERRATA

In our March issue, the date of Mangal Pandey's hanging was given as May 10. According to records, it is April 8, 1857.

We neglected to mention that the review of Junoon, as well as the earlier review of Ek Din Prati Din, was written by Sumanta.

We regret that a major part of the article on the firebombing incidents in British Columbia was left out inadvertently. This issue carries the story in full, with an update.

## WANGAR

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## WOMEN PROTEST POLICE-BEATING

Eight women came to Delhi from Modinagar, UP, to protest beatings by policemen. The women had been preparing to go on a group hunger-strike near the gate of the Modinagar Spinning and Weaving Mills to protest harassment of their husbands by the authorities.

M. Chandra, president of the Modinagar Mahila Sangharsh Samiti, said that the authorities were harassing their husbands because they had refused to come to Delhi on February 16 to join the Congress(I) kisan rally.



# Women Construction Workers of Warangal

[The following is taken from a paper in Economic and Political Weekly by K.Murali Manohar, V.Shobha and B.Janardhan Rao, based on questioning 240 women who work on canals, roads and buildings in Warangal, Andhra.]

A significant percentage of working women are employed in construction. The work involved is lifting earth-loads, cutting soil, carrying water, bricks, mortar, cement, stones and sand, crushing bricks, mixing cement-concrete and other menial jobs. They earn daily Rs 3 plus half a pound of rice or Rs 4-5 with nothing in kind.

The work is seasonal and very unreliable. Most of the workers are casual laborers, employed on a daily basis. Canal workers are generally contract workers, belonging to a contractor and going to work anywhere he tells them to.

The women are quite young - 59% under 24. Many started working when they were less than ten. Most canal workers are married, staying with their families. Most road and building workers are unmarried. Most children also work; very few attend school. Twelve percent of the women thought boys should know to read and write; no one saw any use in educating girls.

Most come from rural areas in Telengana. Only 2% belong to forward castes; 31% are backward, 41% Harijans and 21% tribals.

Most families (86%) are in debt. A third owe money to their contractors, a third to moneylenders and the rest to landlords. Interest rates range from 25% to 160% per annum.

Regarding housing, contractors provide material adequate for a 4' by 5' hut (5' high) with no ventilation. Adults have to sleep outside. The road and building workers have no amenities despite

the fact that their work-spots come under public works rules and other regulations.

Contract workers generally cannot leave their jobs since most of them owe money to their contractors. When someone escapes, the contractor's agents catch them and bring them back. They are also forced to cast their votes for the contractor's candidates in elections. When Indira Gandhi came to Warangal on an election tour, all the canal workers were taken to the public meeting to provide an audience. On the positive side, they got paid for the day.

The women's health is poor. About 40% were in bed for more than a week in the past two years. There are no medical facilities at construction sites. Patients are told to go to government hospitals; they lose their wages while they are gone. Consequently, visiting a doctor is considered a luxury they cannot afford. When children get sick, they get no treatment or get sent to quacks. The death rate among children is high.

There is no paid maternity leave. So women continue to work during pregnancy till at least the eighth month. More than half worked till the day of the delivery and resumed after 3 or 4 weeks. Most deliveries are at home, without even a midwife to help.

Only 30% of the women did not smoke or drink. But the men smoked and drank much more.

Though many of the women earn more than 40% of their families' income, they have only a limited role in family affairs. Cooking, looking after children and buying groceries are considered exclusively their responsibility. Most of a woman's income goes to buy food while at least a part of the man's goes for liquor or tobacco. About a third of the women said drunken husbands beat their wives.

## Workers in Booming Luxury Hotels

The hotel business in Delhi is doing very well. Statistics about the occupancy rate in the government-owned India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) hotels in the capital show how full the hotels are. In the six hotels owned by ITDC, the occupancy rate varied between 65 and 96% in 1979-80 and 1980-81. Some luxury hotels in the private sector are doing equally well.

The tourist industry is booming with the visit to India this year of about a million foreign travelers. Further, with excursion fares and leave travel facilities available to a number of people, domestic tourism is also becoming more and more popular. Naturally the hotel business has attracted a lot of new investment and several luxury hotels are coming up fast.

Despite such a boom, the service conditions of the hotel workers is far from satisfactory. According to some estimates, there are about 10,000 workers in Delhi's pri-

vate sector hotels and restaurants. In addition, there are about 3,000 people employed in ITDC hotels and about 5,000 in small places like dhabas.

For the vast majority of these workers, the hours are long. While the workers are expected to make the guests feel at home and give them all the comforts they have paid for, the workers themselves have few amenities.

Job security is minimal and in many cases facilities usually regarded as an essential feature of any regular employment like dearness allowance, provident fund, bonus and retirement benefits are non-existent.

To cap it all, it is not unusual for a person working in a glittering five-star hotel to spend his or her free hours in a dingy hovel.

Not long ago, the hotel workers of Aurangabad, a tourist town, expressed their resentment against service conditions by launching a strike.

## Rajahara Miners Protest Leader's Arrest

The arrest of Shankar Guha Niyogi, organizing secretary of the Chattisgarh Mines Shramik Sangh, Rajahara, has triggered an agitation by the mine workers.

The situation in Rajahara appears to be explosive as pay arrears of Rs 8.5 million for the miners for the last four months are yet to be paid to them.

The labor leader was arrested a few days after the Madhya Pradesh industries minister, Jhumuklal Bhedia, alleged that the central civil supplies minister, V.C.Shukla (since dismissed), had met Niyogi and hatched a plot to destabilize the Arjun Singh ministry.

### NSA ARREST

A few days later, the commissioner of Raipur division branded Niyogi as a Naxalite and issued an arrest warrant under the National Security Act (NSA). He was arrested on Feb. 11.

Since then, miners, shopkeepers and other businessmen have been agitating because to them Niyogi is a good man. The president of the local BJP, Deep Chand Parekh, said, "He was only doing good work for the laborers and kisans by launching an effec-

tive campaign against the evils of drinking, gambling and satta."

Parekh alleges that the labor leader's campaign against drinking has brought him in direct confrontation with Bhedia, whom he has accused of being a "friend" of liquor contractors. According to Parekh, the union office is now being used by the police for drinking bouts.

Asha Niyogi, wife of the miners' leader, who courted arrest on February 15 along with 600 workers, said that they were taken in trucks to Manpur, a forest area 80 km away and left at night. Some women demonstrators had with them children aged three months to six years. They all had to trek back home. Asha Niyogi said an old man died after a heart attack in the forest. Twelve were missing, she added.

Some miners told the Times of India correspondent that ten years ago, their daily wage was Rs 3. But because of Niyogi's campaign and leadership, the average income had now gone up to Rs 20 per day.

Niyogi was released on March 19 under orders from the high court.

## Seminar Highlights Migrant Labor's Plight

Startling accounts of the conditions in which migrant labor is constrained to work were related by participants at a seminar on the subject held recently in New Delhi. Administrators, academics, sociologists and trade union leaders participated.

K.B.Saxena detailed how adivasis worked in near-slavery conditions through a multi-tier mechanism. He suggested changes in the law enabling the prosecution of erring employers and ensuring protection to all migrant labor.

Manjit Singh and K.G.Iyer,

taking up case studies, pointed to massive immigration into Punjab by workers from distant states like Bihar. According to the studies, migration has resulted in stagnation, if not depression, of wages in the state. These workers suffer at the hands of the rich farmers, police and railwaymen.

Papers were presented on Telengana migrant labor in Bombay and Dadan labor from Orissa.

The problems of migrant labor were attributed to socio-economic and infrastructural deficiency, government apathy and legal gaps.

## Govt Agrees to Share

### Bombay High with French Oil Co.

P.C.Sethi, Minister of Petroleum and Chemicals, has concluded an agreement with the French Petroleum Company (CFP) for stepping up crude oil production at Bombay High on production-sharing basis. The Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) and its technical staff have opposed the agreement since the ONGC is qualified to do the job on its own. Sethi said that "many heads will roll" for making such claims.

ONGC already has a consultancy agreement with CFP, due to expire soon. But Sethi decided to negotiate on his own, instead of letting ONGC renew its agreement as it sees fit.

ONGC, with CFP's advice, had decided on a plan to raise Bombay High oil output to 12 million tons a year by 1982. Now Sethi wants CFP to increase it further to 17 million tons. It is curious that CFP agreed since its experts had

originally been skeptical even about the 12 mn-ton goal since any increase in extraction rate without careful regulation can lead to greatly reduced life span of the oil field and a lower yield overall. The prospect of product-sharing appears to have helped the French to overcome their earlier reservations.

The government has not revealed the French share of the additional production over 12 mn tons; some reports say it is 5 to 10%.

The way in which the Indian government is responding to higher oil prices suggests that in the future, where fresh exploration is involved, foreign companies may get even higher percentages of the output. Critics believe that the government is all too eager to barter away much of the country's precious oil wealth in its bid to find oil in a desperate hurry.

(taken from article by BM in E&PW)



### A Tribute to 1857

India's is an ancient civilization. Many languages, customs, cultures and religions make the fabric of our society. India's contributions in the fields of science, medicine, economics and political thought are many.

No wonder there is a lot in our past about which we can be justly proud. The year 1857 is such a glorious phase of our history.

It is the year of the First War of Independence - the most important year in the ultimate defeat of the British in 1947.

1857 witnessed unprecedented sacrifice, courage and a sense of political and military organization on the part of the Indian people. It forged an unqualified unity among Hindus and Muslims who fought together as a single family. The flames of revolt against foreign rule spread. The desire to get Hindustan rid of firangees (British) generated a common bond between different regions, customs and languages from Bengal to Delhi as well as in central and western India. It was a war mainly fought by the peasants who still make up 80% of India.

1857 so shook the British empire that various apologists of British colonial rule joined hands to malign this patriotic

upsurge of our people as a "sepoy mutiny."

It is a year held with a sense of pride by various strata of our society. Hence an important day of this important year rightly deserves to be commemorated as India's national day.

An important day of that year was May 10 when the war began and Meerut was taken over. Indian soldiers then marched the 30 miles from Meerut to Delhi and next day, Delhi once again came under the control of patriotic forces. May 10 can rightly be celebrated as a National Day.

Various chapters of IPANA have decided to celebrate this day in one fashion or another. The celebrations may not be on that specific day. But they will be in tribute to 1857. The Toronto chapter already held a celebration in March. Montreal is presenting a play by Theater Workshop (New York) on April 25. At other places, celebrations in the form of meetings, dinners, social activities or other festivities are being planned for April and May.

We earnestly hope that our compatriots will take their own initiative to celebrate this glorious page of our history in whatever way they choose.

Finance Minister R. Venkataraman has claimed that his budget proposals for 1981-82 represent a departure from crisis management-type budgeting to a budget for growth. Major newspapers have reacted generally favorably to the budget proposals, which offer, among other things, concessions in income tax to salaried workers. However, a close scrutiny of the budget reveals no plan for growth but rather an inability to control non-developmental expenditure or to increase the purchasing power of the vast majority of the people.

Much has been written about the raising of the income tax exemption limit from Rs 12,000 to Rs 15,000 and the nil-tax slab from Rs 8,000 to Rs 15,000. This releases about 1.4 million persons from having to pay any income tax and decreases the tax rate of another 1.15 million in the income bracket of Rs 15,000 to Rs 30,000. The reduction in taxes, which affects a negligible fraction of the population, amounts to only a few hundred rupees. Behind the reduction is the probable fact that the assesseees have been paying less in taxes than the cost of maintaining their files. The tax saved is meager and is unlikely to add much to production-oriented savings since the incrementally larger disposable income will be needed to meet the rising costs of living.

It may also be noted that by raising the standard deduction, Venkataraman has given a tax break even to people who make much more than Rs 30,000. Of course, all this leaves out the rural rich who pay virtually no direct tax since agricultural income is not within the purview of income tax.

The finance minister estimated the total budget receipts for 1981-82 at Rs 230.6 billion and expenditure at Rs 248.7 billion. The overall deficit of Rs 18.1 billion will be brought down to Rs 15.4 billion through auxiliary customs duties and some other levies. Venkataraman said that the deficit might appear large, but taking a total view of the economic situation, it would be within the limits of fiscal prudence.

The planned deficit is indeed smaller than the Rs 26.9 billion in 1979-80 and Rs 18.1 billion in 1980-81. But Venkataraman's budget assumes as part of the receipts Rs 13.8 billion in external assistance and Rs 8 billion from the special bearer bond scheme introduced for the purposes of recovering black money.

With the Reagan administration in office, there is uncertainty concerning the US government's external assis-

tance program either on a bilateral basis or through various international agencies. In this context, the inclusion of Rs 13.8 billion in receipts from external assistance (net of debt repayment) may not fully or even partially materialize and this will only boost up drastically the actual deficit.

Another major increase in the deficit could occur if the bearer bonds do not succeed. The inflationary potential of these cumulative budgetary deficits is certainly stupendous.

The minister claims credit for not increasing excise duties for generating general revenues this year. But what is not pointed out is that the present government is simply taking advantage of the massive additional excise duties of Rs 4.9 billion in 1978 and Rs 4.6 billion in 1979, which now sustain revenue growth even as industrial output stagnates.

Subsidies of various sorts are to go up to Rs 17 billion from Rs 14.2 billion. Subsidy for food is Rs 6.5 billion, foreign trade and export promotion have been given Rs 4.4 billion, mines and minerals Rs 1.47 billion, controlled cloth scheme Rs 1 billion, and the fertilizer retention price scheme Rs 3 billion.

In addition to these massive subsidies, the finance minister has announced a number of concessions to the private industrial sector, supposedly to stimulate production. The income tax surcharge is reduced from 7.5% to 2.5%, fourteen industries have been taken out of their low priority classification thus entitling them to claim tax concessions, a total tax holiday of 5 years for industries in the free trade zones, and the definition of a small-scale industry has been raised from Rs 1 million to Rs 2 million, thus qualifying more for tax concessions. But Venkataraman has not indicated why despite various subsidies and concessions in the past, these industries have remained stagnant, perpetually requiring governmental aid. In an economy where very few (less than 20%) can afford to buy industrial products, a capitalist makes more profit by restricting output and charging high prices than by producing more at a lower price.

Most importantly, the budget proposals do not include any item which may contribute to increasing the purchasing power of the people who ultimately are the consumers of the various agricultural and industrial products. In the absence of this, it is far from clear how production will be stimulated and what will be the goal of the enhanced production.

### CPI May Expel Dange

S.A. Dange, former chairman of the Communist Party of India and presently a member of its national council, may be expelled from the party, according to CPI sources. This is in response to Dange's participation at the Meerut conference of the All-India Communist Party (AICP) led by his daughter Roza Deshpande where he criticized CPI's attitude to Indira Gandhi as wrong.

CPI's general secretary, Rajeswara Rao, said that by attending the Meerut conference of the AICP, Dange "has placed himself outside the pale of the party." CPI circles claim that AICP's Meerut conference is part of Indira's grand design to first isolate CPI and then split it. The direction given by her that no Congress(I) member should associate with CPI-sponsored pro-Soviet organizations is said to be aimed at isolating CPI.

Rajeswara Rao sent Dange a show-cause notice asking him for an explanation for attending the "Meerut Conference of the splitters." Dange responded on March 28 by calling him a "high-brow evil genius", engaged in a conspiracy to ruin CPI from within and liquidate it to please CPM. It was learned at press-time that the executive of CPI has recommended Dange's expulsion.

Dange, while addressing the AICP conference, des-

cribed its formation as a timely and historical necessity. He refuted allegations that AICP was blindly tailing Indira Gandhi. "We are neither Indiraite nor is Indira our main area," he said. "The communist party of which I am a member thinks Mrs. Gandhi is the chief enemy of the Indian people. I consider this totally wrong," he said. He wanted the "bad tendencies" of the Indian communist movement brushed aside by the AICP congress.

Earlier during the delegates' session, CPI came in for sharp criticism for allegedly joining hands with reactionary forces in opposing Indira Gandhi. Later, meeting with reporters, Dange said he was attending the meeting after taking into consideration all aspects. Asked if he would leave CPI and join AICP, he said, "We will see."

According to CPI sources, the central leadership is left with no alternative but to formally expel the former chairman. There are others who say that the central leadership of CPI will have to consult the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) before any action is initiated against Dange. The general secretary of AICP, Roza Deshpande, has claimed that CPSU supports her party. Some sections of CPI's rank and file have reportedly concluded that CPSU leadership in Moscow has deliberately propped up AICP to please Indira Gandhi.





# Comment : Indira Gandhi and Brotherhood

N.KANUNGO

In a speech at a seminar organized by the Vivekananda Nidhi in Calcutta, Indira Gandhi said that "politics was not essentially (sic) bereft of values." In a speech entitled "Value orientation in human problem solving," she said that politics had been rendered superficial because of the superficial attempts at improving the conditions we live in by "elitist intellectuals." She also said that belatedly she had made the discovery that all known forms of government had proven their inadequacy in solving the basic problems of society. She said that capitalism, communism and even democracy had failed to deliver the goods. Of all the systems she had discovered to be ineffective she chose to give a long discourse on China and Mao Zedong. She said Mao had launched a new type of revolution and instilled the consciousness of the "new man" which had attracted many people to work for change. But now with Mao gone, people have grown disillusioned.

Talk about superficial intellectualism! But she is very cunning too. Notice that she has of late been making pronouncements about how democracy was not the best model for India. Of late some of her cohorts like Antulay in Maharashtra have even declared that the present constitution should scrap the right of the judiciary to be independent of Parliament. For the last ten years, Indira Gandhi has pointedly mentioned her as well as her father's (she never fails to mention him in any speech) commitment to democracy. Of late she has changed her tune. In this same seminar she repeatedly said that India had to uphold new ideals in the modern situation that had come to be. What was this new ideal? According to her, "We in India are dedicated to the ideal of brotherhood." Since when? In the last thirty years all official speeches have been generously laced with talk of commitment to democracy, socialism and secularism. Has she discovered a new god? Has

she been quietly ruminating all these years about what is "practical and possible" for our country and has some divine revelation been made to her? We know that she frequents astrologers more often than she cares to read a proper history of China before she delivers a discourse on Mao Zedong. But what is this new affection for "brotherhood"? What is this brotherhood anyway? Who are the brothers? (We do know that she once made a statement that she was the only "man" in the cabinet).

God forbid what's on this woman's mind when she talks about a new set of values for our country. When she was "committed" to democracy, we got a taste of that commitment when non-Congress governments were toppled several times through the offices of the governor, Emergency was declared and more than 100,000 people from the opposition were put behind bars. During the famous railway strike, thousands of workers were thrown out of their quarters and permanently laid off. And of course while she was committed to democracy, we had the thousand cases of encounters with police in which more than 5,000 Naxalites were murdered in cold blood after their arrest. We are saying all this because the government-appointed Tarkunde Commission documented these happenings. Justice Tarkunde, who is now President of the People's Union for Civil Liberties, also chose to give a title to the inquiry report - "Encounters are Murders."

We also remember how in Kilvenmani, when 43 Harijan peasants were burnt alive all the landlords' men who had openly admitted to the crime were acquitted. We now know that in Bhagalpur 34 undertrial prisoners were forced down on the ground and their eyeballs gouged out by bicycle spokes and needles. After that acid was poured and bandaged shut. Indira Gandhi's Home Minister refused to have a judicial inquiry on the matter. She declared that it was not good to demoralize the pol-

ice. Of course some hacks had the gall to say that all these prisoners were dangerous and deserved such treatment. In which civilized country, where brotherhood and tolerance are such lofty ideals, do such ghastly acts occur? We have heard that Bokassa had done such things. And Bokassa also talked of brotherhood, I believe. Anyway reporters are now revealing that many of these undertrials had no criminal record and had been

arrested in a general roundup.

That is why I am saying we should all be careful. The way things are now, with prisoners getting their eyes gouged out, with Harijan women getting raped and killed every day somewhere in the country - we have a lot of reasons to worry when she declares that she has changed her ideals and believes in "brotherhood."

## Tidbits from Indira Gandhi's Kisan Rally

Rajiv Gandhi had complete charge of organizing the show. He put together a small team of his close friends and they began the work of collecting the kisans from all over the country, transporting them to the capital, feeding them, giving them shelter and then sending them back.

### CLOSED CIRCUIT TV

Rajiv thought up the two "novelty items." One was a huge portrait of Indira, on cloth, held up by two balloons, above and behind the dais. The other was the arrangement for closed circuit television to enable the farmers at the back to view her. It did not work too well: February 16 was sunny and the image did not register clearly enough on the screens in the open.

### GAS BALLOONS

Three helicopters were used to scatter leaflets over the massed kisans. There was also a plan in which Vishwabandhu Gupta, president of the Ballooning Society of India, would rise up in a gas balloon, presumably to scatter more leaflets. But the balloon did not go up because the hot air outside proved to be hotter

than the hot air inside the balloon.

Everything was results oriented; no excuses were tolerated. Those Congress(I) leaders who reached the capital without any kisans in tow got a severe dressing down.

Wherever possible, Rajiv's own friends rather than the traditional hierarchy was given charge.

The railways, nudged ferociously by Kedar Pande, did a pretty efficient job - at the expense of completely abandoning other travelers and goods traffic. As many as 122 kisan specials were run to Delhi from all parts of the country: 22 from Maharashtra, 18 from MP, 14 from Bihar, 13 from UP, 10 from West Bengal, 9 from Punjab, etc. The normal cost of hiring a special train is Rs 48,000 - this for a train of 8 coaches. For the rally, the trains were much longer. Besides the trains, more than 20,000 trucks brought in farmers from within 150 to 200 miles.

Not all those who came to the rally were farmers. Faridabad's industrialists cooperated by looking the other way if their workers went to the "kisan" rally.

## Cong(I) Sponsors Friends of the Soviet Union

Some Congress(I) members of Parliament have announced the formation of a new organization, Friends of the Soviet Union (FSU), with former Minister of State for Finance, K.R. Ganesh, as its convenor. This organization has apparently been endorsed by senior party leaders including Indira Gandhi.

The sponsors of the new pro-Soviet organization claim that the need for it arose from the hostile attitude of CPI and CPM to Indira Gandhi and their attempt to mislead the public by asserting that their assessment of her was also shared by Soviet leaders. These two parties were also trying to convince the people that they alone stood for friendship between India and the Soviet Union, according to FSU. The sponsors added that it was demoralizing for the rank and file to watch several Congress(I) MP's address meetings sponsored by various communist front organizations in the absence of an alternate platform. The new association will correct this impression and also convey to CPI and CPM that their mono-

poly in regard to promoting greater links between India and the Soviet Union is unacceptable.

The floating of FSU with the prime minister's endorsement is viewed as part of her attempts to weaken the root of CPI and its front organizations, particularly the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society (ISCUS). Paralleling this development, Home Minister Zail Singh has sent a circular to all Cong(I) MP's and MLA's asking them not to accept foreign trips and hospitality without securing the permission of the party leader. It is well-known that one of the main functions of ISCUS and similar organizations is to send delegations to Soviet bloc countries. These delegations, though they may consist of non-CPI members, are chosen by CPI leaders and the trips are exploited to generate a wide base of influence among the general public in favor of the Soviet Union. The Home Minister's circular attempts to eliminate CPI from being a middleman while retaining intact the influence-buying activities on behalf of the Soviet Union.

## Murders in Congress (I)

The attempt on the life of Bhagawat Jha Azad on January 25 is only the most recent in a series of violent incidents involving different factions of Congress(I). During the attack on Azad, who is from Bihar and is the central minister of state for supply and rehabilitation, his security guard was killed. The attack came just a week after someone tried to kill Moiddun Rehman, minister of state for public health, near Begusarai in Bihar when Rehman was on his way to Patna from Purnea.

Other murders involving Congress(I) in the past few months include the following: On September 3, according to the Indian Express, a truck hit the car of Nariman Pithawala, a Congress(I) leader from Surat; when he tried to run away, he was caught by

seven people and beaten to death.

On November 4, according to the Times of India, Ram Sevak Garg, Cong(I) president in Panna district, Madhya Pradesh, was killed by "dacoits" in his home. On November 9, according to the Indian Express, Vir Singh Yadav, a Cong(I) leader of UP, was shot dead along with his brother. On December 18, according to the Indian Express, Om Shankar Yadav, Cong(I) secretary of Jalaun, was found murdered.

Lending credence to the theory of gang warfare within Congress(I) is the unusual silence on the party's part as well as lack of news about any subsequent investigations.

(information from E & PW)



## Varanasi Police Break Young Men's Legs

This is another horror story. The policemen of Varanasi have been trying to "prevent" crime - by the bloodcurdling method of breaking the victims' legs. The victims' legs were broken by policemen jumping on the kneecaps and then twisting the leg, sometimes rotating it, till it cracked at the knee. The victim, locked in a room in the thana, would keep screaming in pain and terror while the sadism continued. After the leg was broken, the victim would be sent to the hospital. And no one protested. Except the victims. But no one listened to them. S.N.M. Abdi, a correspondent for Sunday magazine, located 12 twelve specific cases and spoke to nine men whose legs had been broken by the police.

Most of them were young, at least three genuine students. True, they were considered unsavory characters in the neighborhood, but not one of them could be considered a dacoit of the kind punished in Bhagalpur. A more accurate description would be that they were local dadas, with records of minor crime. Abdi believes that they were not victims of police overzealousness but of police avarice or vengeance - either they had stopped bribing the police or had antagonized the police in some way or the other. This form of police terrorism began in the early seventies and is continuing.

### KRISHNA MURARI SINGH

Krishna Murari Singh, 29, was arrested on July 20, 1979. At two that night, six uniformed policemen entered the small room where he was kept. The team was led by the then circle officer R.N. Kataria. At the station officer Chandra Bhushan Tripathi's order, two constables first blindfolded Murari and then tied up his hands with a gamcha (coarse towel). Murari, still squatting on the floor, was ordered to lie down with his legs stretched.

Murari vividly remembers the brutal, bloodcurdling operation which he narrated to S.N.M. Abdi: "I was stretched on the floor and couldn't see a thing. Two people were standing on my thighs and stamping it. Then two persons caught hold of my left foot and began lifting it upwards. While I was in this position, one person kicked

my knee joint viciously breaking the knee-cap. Then my left leg was stretched on the ground and a policeman's boots repeatedly pounded my damaged left knee. I was asked whether I had heard the sound of the knee-cap being shattered. I remained silent. Somebody again lifted up my left leg and rotated it in clockwise direction. I experienced searing pain but I did not faint. Next, they untied my hands and in identical fashion my right elbow was cracked by two people. Finally, somebody dropped a slab of stone on my left knee. This is what they did that night."

The bone-breaking torture over, the policemen removed the blindfold, dumped Murari into a jeep and took him to the hospital. His left leg developed gangrene and had to be amputated.

Not only did Murari become lame, but he also lost the use of his right hand. He was later acquitted by the courts, which stressed the point that the police had concocted a case with the help of three police witnesses.

Who will punish the policemen who are blatantly guilty of crippling and maiming him? Will anybody pay any penalty for breaking somebody's hand and leg?

"Why don't you prosecute the policemen in a court?" Abdi asked. Murari's reply was instantaneous: "I am a common man. Can I afford to antagonize the police? When they blindfolded me at the kotwali, I thought they were going to shoot me. They are capable of hounding and harassing me and my family. I have a wife and four young children to look after. Initiating legal action would mean inviting trouble. Policemen are very dangerous. I am a nobody. They can even harm you if you oppose them."

### OTHERS

Kapildeo Singh: 22 years old, a music student at Benares Hindu University (BHU), right knee destroyed on July 28, 1980.

Gopal Yadav, a sociology student at BHU, arrested on January 29, 1980, on suspicion of having robbed a policeman. His right knee was shattered and had to be amputated. In August 1980, he was



Krishna Murari Singh  
(photo by Vijay Seth)

cleared of the original charge. Yadav says: "I can become a rebel and avenge my humiliation, but what about my family? My parents may be harassed and their properties seized."

Shyam Babu, 33, arrested on January 21, 1978, and right leg broken. The leg had to be amputated.

### WHY?

Since 1974, the police have broken the legs of scores of alleged criminals. Most of the victims belong to the backward castes. In Varanasi, most policemen who control the thanas belong to the upper castes. In most cases, leg breaking operations have followed the pattern of age-old intercaste animosities. And the police officers get protection from politicians belonging to their caste. Traditionally, the top police posts in Varanasi have been held by Brahmins, thanks to their political domination through Kamalapati Tripathi (until recently Railways Minister). For instance, both the superintendent and the senior superintendent are Brahmins. Three out of six A class thanas are run by Brahmin station officers.

(abridged from Sunday)

### MURDERED MAN'S RELATIVES PROTEST AT ZAIL'S HOME

On March 2, over 300 men and women squatted outside Home Minister Zail Singh's home. They were protesting the murder of Ramesh Kumar, a 22-year-old transporter. Ramesh was allegedly tortured to death by the UP police in Meerut.

According to Ramesh's relatives, when he was returning to Delhi from Meerut on February 26, some policemen stopped his vehicle and took him to Lalpura police station. When the relatives went there the next day, a police officer told them Ramesh had escaped but the relatives became suspicious when they saw the cop wearing Ramesh's watch.

## Hyderabad Cops Get away with Rape

Five Hyderabad policemen, accused of gangraping Rameeza Bee and killing her husband Ahmed Hussain on March 29, 1978, were acquitted by a district court in Raichur. Three others were convicted for wrongful confinement and extortion but were released after "admonition."

The rape and murder had triggered widespread protests in Hyderabad. The Andhra government appointed Justice Mukhtadar to investigate the incident. He found the eight policemen guilty. Before the trial could begin, the cops got the Supreme Court to change the venue on the grounds that they could not get a fair trial in Hyderabad. Raichur is in Karnataka, far enough from Hyderabad for the policemen to get the trial they wanted. Unfortunately, the victims did not get a fair trial.

During the trial, the Special Public Prosecutor for the government is reported to have functioned as a defense lawyer, pleading for compassion to the policemen. He helped the judge come to the conclusion that Rameeza was a prostitute (with no evidence) and there was no rape involved. The judge, Justice Navadgi, considered Rameeza Bee's evidence to be "polluted."

Justice Mukhtadar had determined that two cops had taken Rameeza to the Nallakunta police station, where sub-inspector Surender Singh raped her. Subsequently she was raped by three more cops. But Justice Navadgi was convinced that a sub-inspector, "after raping a woman, would not allow three of his subordinates under his very nose to share the body of that woman."

The chemical examiner had found that Rameeza's saree and undergarments had semen and blood but Justice Navadgi was not persuaded that there was a connection.

Navadgi thanked the special prosecutor profusely for his "able and valuable assistance."

### NEW PARTY IN BANGLADESH

A new political party, the Ganatantrik Party (Democratic Party), was formed on December 7, 1980, in Bangladesh as a result of the merger of several parties including Bhashani NAP, Ganofront, Jagmu and a fraction of the United People's Party. About 15,000 delegates from different districts attended the convention that led to the founding of the new party. The convention was presided over by Nurul Huda Mirza and addressed by various leaders of the party as well as Mohammed Toha of Samyabadi Dal and peasant leader Bimal Biswas.

According to reports, the new party aims at "fighting against national and international reactionaries together with patriotic groups opposed to the domination of the country by foreign forces."

INDIA NOW April 1981

## Blinded Prisoners Say "No" to Bihar Govt's Ruse

All seven blinded undertrial prisoners of Bhagalpur jail, who are now staying in Delhi, have told the Registrar of the Supreme Court that they do not want to go back to their native places in Bihar.

The Registrar was asked by the Supreme Court on March 2 to find out from the seven separately and independently whether they want to go back, as claimed by the Bihar government.

The Bihar government has alleged that vested interests were trying to keep the undertrials in Delhi to blackmail the state government. In fact,

the undertrials wanted to return to Bihar, the government lawyer asserted. The men have denied the government's claim.

Six blinded prisoners have been staying in the blind home run by the All-India Blind Relief Society in Lajpatnagar ever since their writ petitions came up before the Supreme Court, under the court's direction. The seventh, Baljit Singh, is undergoing orthopedic treatment at AIMS; he may be there for another two months.



# Encounter Deaths in Tamil Nadu Police Version Disputed

[The following is abridged from the Statesman.]

Ever since the members of a factfinding team were beaten up in mid-October, no civil liberties organization has even thought of sending another group to find out what actually happened in last year's massive police operation against Naxalites in Tamil Nadu's North Arcot and Dharmapuri districts.

Perhaps any attempt would be equally futile, for even today it is difficult to move about freely in these two districts to meet people and collect facts. This correspondent, who spent nearly two weeks in Tamil Nadu, could visit North Arcot only briefly to verify what information he could obtain in Madras about the "incidents" in which 13 people have so far been killed by police.

First, the names of 12 of the 13 killed who have been identified: Selvam, Rajappa and Perumal (August 6); Nandi Perumal (August 12); Subramaniam and Shanmugan (Sept. 11); Balan (Sept. 13); Kanakraj (Sept. 18); Chinnadurai (Oct. 12); Jayapal (Oct. 14); Manoharan (Dec. 10); and Kannamani (Dec. 27).

According to the police, they were flushed out of the forests in the Yelagiri hills where they were hiding. As a matter of fact, almost all of them were arrested in towns and villages. Several of them, far from being in hiding, were working openly as trade union leaders.

## AUGUST 6

On August 6, Selvam and three policemen were killed when a bomb exploded in a car that was taking them to a police station. According to the police, Rajappa and Perumal escaped in the confusion but could not run far because they were injured. The police rearrested them but they died while being taken to hospital.

According to hundreds of people who gathered around the Kandili police station, Rajappa and Perumal were very much alive when they were brought to that police station with another Naxalite, Chinnathambi. They were beaten and Rajappa and Perumal died of the injuries. What happened to Chinnathambi is not known.

## SEPTEMBER 11

On September 11, Subramaniam and Shanmugan, who had been organizing landless Harijan laborers, were, the police reported, shot while fleeing after throwing a bomb which did not explode because it fell on sandy soil.

But villagers say that the two were seized in a village hut in Kambiampath and taken to Kathirampatti village, 10 km away. They were interrogated and when they said they did not know anything about the missing Naxalite leader Shivalingam, they were beaten and later shot.

## BALAN

Balan, a young Harijan bidi

worker, was arrested on September 6 at 10 PM while he was addressing a meeting at Seerampatti village near Marandahalli in Dharmapuri district.

According to press reports based on the police version, he sustained serious injuries (fractures) while resisting arrest. The police took him to the hospital in Dharmapuri and from there he was taken to the Madras General Hospital where, six days later, he died of "heart ache."

Others say that after his arrest Balan was taken to the Palacode police station for interrogation. He could not give the information the police thought he possessed regarding Naxalite activities and so was tortured. Both his legs were fractured and he also suffered other serious injuries. It was only then that he was taken to the Dharmapuri hospital.

When word spread in the morning that he had been admitted there, a large crowd gathered outside. Secretly he was then taken to Madras, more than 200 km away.

A little before his death on September 13, Balan thanked the nurses attending on him in the General Hospital. He told them that it was no use trying to save his life because the police would not let him live. But, he said, when he died, there would be someone to take his place and the "present system of exploitation" would not survive very long.

His body was not handed over to his relatives. Only his ashes after cremation were given to them.

## KANAKRAJ

On September 18, Kanakraj was killed in an encounter with the police in Kalkathiyur village when he was attempting to throw a bomb, it was reported in the press. But there are people who saw him being arrested while he was reading a newspaper in a teashop at midday in Periakammampatti village near Jolarpet. He was taken to Kalkathiyur village and shot.

## CHINNADURAI

Again, according to press reports, Chinnadurai and another man were killed in an encounter with the police on land bordering Athikuppam and Bommikuppam villages near Tiruppattur.

The villagers say that the two were arrested at night near Jolarpet and brought to Bommikuppam. The whole night they were interrogated and tortured and in the morning they were shot in a field. Two children of the Katteri panchayat board president, Subramaniam, who were going to school, heard the shots.

## KANNAMANI

On December 27, according to the police, Kannamani was killed in a gun battle near Madacadappal in the hilly area bordering Andhra. He had fired with a muzzle-loading gun, injuring six policemen. Earlier he had killed two landlords and a constable.

# Orissa Journalist Charges Police Torture

Barely four and a half months after a pregnant Chabirani Mahapatra was gangraped and murdered on a forlorn riverbed in Biridi, a policeman and businessman in Odagaon, a small town in the Nayagarh subdivision of Puri district, got together to perpetrate yet another assault on human dignity and press freedom in Orissa.

Jatadhari Rana, 45, is a simple, persevering and "foolishly" frank local correspondent for Orissa's leading daily Samaj. He was implicated by the police in a criminal case, arrested on February 19, handcuffed and paraded on the streets. His feet were in shackles, but authorities deny this. That is not all, however. Rana claims that in the lock-up he was forced to drink a glass of the businessman's urine. When Rana resisted, a



Jatadhari Rana being led to the Nayagarh court sub-inspector

There are people who saw the police seizing Kannamani while he was working on a road in Hasthampatti village, 5 km east of Salem. His hands were tied and he was taken to the travelers' bungalow nearby for interrogation. Kannamani refused to answer questions and demanded that he should be produced before a magistrate. He was taken instead to the police station.

Kannamani was one of the top leaders of the underground political activists in the region; Devaram, Deputy Inspector-General, came from Tiruppattur to the police station to see the man who had long been on the "wanted" list. A local crime reporter who happened to be at the police station at that time told this correspondent that Kannamani was threatened with a knife.

Kannamani refused to give any information about others of the underground. Finally he was made to stand facing a wall and was shot, according to the people of the area.

The information that this correspondent collected could not be verified with the authorities. And for good reason.

To interview police officers, particularly Devaram and Mohandas of the Q Branch who planned the operations, would have been to invite shadowing by plainclothesmen, jeopardizing informants and risking the safety of the notes taken. A request for an interview with the chief minister was rejected by his personal secretary.

But it is a pity that an inquiry into an operation that has endangered the lives of hundreds of people is not being allowed.

police cane was shoved into his anus, and he was forced to open his mouth and swallow the sickening liquid.

Rana's father, who had a weak heart, and had always been afraid of his son getting into trouble with the police over his reporting, was stunned when told the news of his son's situation. He made a feeble attempt to look up, clutched his temples and died of shock.

The police officer, Khuntia, wanted to avenge Rana's "exaggerated" reports in Samaj which he found insulting, and the businessman, Kashi Pati, had an old grudge against Rana. The people of Odagaon believe that Rana was accurate in his reporting of crime and scandal in the area.

The public outcry that followed made the state government suspend and transfer Khuntia. For the people of Odagaon, it was a victory of sorts, but for Khuntia it was no big punishment for humiliating an honest journalist and causing an old man's death.

## 3 KARNATAKA COPS RAPE COFFEE-PICKER

Three policemen of Hosakote, Karnataka, are accused of raping a 16-year-old woman.

Lolakshi is a weed-picker on a coffee plantation near Hassan. In early February, she was taken in for questioning about a murder. She says three policemen - a sub-inspector, a head constable and a constable - beat her up and raped her, one by one. Her deaf mother was held in an adjoining room.

The police superintendent has said the rape charge is a frame-up against the police.



## W. German President Visits India

President Carl Carstens of West Germany recently concluded a six-day visit to India during which he expressed support for the role of the non-aligned movement and offered West Germany's economic assistance to developing countries. During his stay in India, Carstens visited a number of projects carried out with West German aid. Two economic agreements were also signed.

Speaking at a banquet given by President Sanjiva Reddy, Carstens referred to the increasing number of trouble spots in the world and held as responsible the tendency of some countries to invade others in violation of their professed commitment to resolve disputes through peaceful means. He said this tendency could be countered only if countries with common basic convictions came together to oppose the use of force. Carstens also said that international arms control and disarmament were vital to the preservation of durable peace.

In his discussions with Indira Gandhi, he expressed his country's willingness to play an active role in the North-South dialog for the transfer of resources from the developed countries to the developing world. He said that despite his country's difficult budgetary situation, it had substantially increased its development aid and in absolute terms, West Germany was now, along with France, the second largest donor after the US. In this context, he urged

all the developed countries, including those in the Soviet bloc, to increase their transfer of resources to the third world by diverting some of the huge funds currently invested in arms.

During his stay, Carstens visited the Haryana Agricultural University at Hissar where he announced the grant of a research scholarship and also a microscope and other equipment valued at 30,000 DM. In Bombay, he visited the Tata Thermal Power Station at Trombay where India's first 500MW generating unit is under construction with aid from West Germany and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Two agreements were signed at the conclusion of the visit. Under the first, West Germany has agreed to provide as a grant specialized scientific equipment for an oceanographic research vessel being procured by India against a West German credit of DM 50 million. West Germany has also agreed to train Indian scientists and engineers from various user agencies to help them staff the ship. The ship will be used for research, particularly to locate commercially exploitable non-living resources, study meteorological phenomena and exploit marine biology. The cost of technical assistance under this agreement will be about Rs 67 million. The second agreement relates to the Institute of Toolroom Training in Lucknow, which has been set up with West German assistance.

## Russians Circulate Anti-Pak Book in India

A Soviet publication critical of Pakistan and Iran and suggesting a change in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border is currently in circulation in India. The booklet, "The Truth about Afghanistan," is published by Novosti Press of Moscow.

The book claims that the Durand line border between Pakistan and Afghanistan should be changed, "as it was established by colonialists in 1893 and isolated several million Afghans from their fellow countrymen and their motherland." This artificial border has been the cause of conflict and instability in the area, the book claims. The book recalls that the Soviet Union was the first state to endorse the demand for a plebiscite to resolve the Pushtun issue - and Moscow "continues to endorse the just demands of the Afghan people." The Soviet Union always looks with sympathy on the national aspirations of minorities such as Baluchis who are oppressed and denied the right to preserve their identity by imperialist or reactionary elements, according to the Novosti booklet.

The book charges that Iran is being made into a base for aggression against Afghanistan. The Corgon radio center and Mashhad television broadcast the most brazen propaganda of revisionism, nationalism and pan-Islamism to the Soviet Central Asia population and try to incite the Muslims against the government of Afghanistan, the book says.

From the Soviet point of view, Pakistan and Iran having kept up sustained opposition to the Soviet invasion and military presence in Afghanistan, appear as the main hurdles in seeking recognition for the Soviet-installed regime in Kabul. While the book demonstrates Soviet irritation over Iran's and Pakistan's opposition to its armed invasion, the booklet also seems to be paving the way for future incursions into Pakistan's territory by claiming the Afghan-Pak border to be artificial.



Professor Irfan Habib of Aligarh Muslim University (photo by M.J.Akbar of Sunday)

## Progressive Historian under Attack in Aligarh

(continued from p.1)

Habib's actions that got him into trouble were his catching Manzar Safi cheating in an examination last July and his refusing to hold some special examinations.

### EXPRESS INTERVIEW

The crowning insult, for anti-Habib students, was an interview he gave to the Indian Express in January. In response to a question on who was responsible for the state of affairs in AMU, Habib said:

"At one level it is the presence of criminal elements in the university. And at the other, the administration, with respect to examination rules, attendance in classes, etc., has been gradually collapsing. Last year, the university lifted all restrictions on students who had not attended a single class in the entire term.

"The criminal elements have intensified the problem by getting into hostels where they not only get protection but concessions. While rooms are meant for three, these hooligans have managed to get a room for each one of them. One Mr Ahsan, having serious criminal charges against him, was suspended for misbehaving with the head of the botany department and later expelled. Even after that he continued to occupy a room in Habib Hall - meant for academically better students. Mr Manzar Safi, also facing criminal charges and now under expulsion, got a room in Amin Hostel - all to himself. As far as I know he is still staying in the hostel.

"The malady of collapsing administration and misrule of criminals forcing reexaminations whenever they feel like doing so has attained such cancerous proportions that prospective employers have begun to seriously question whether graduates of AMU are at all employable. Even Muslim firms advertising for jobs have blacklisted AMU and they say that AMU graduates need not apply.

"The criminal elements protect themselves by raising petty issues like postponement of examinations to buy support with the students."

### STUDENT PROTESTS

The protesting students demanded that Habib withdraw his "derogatory remarks" or resign as dean. Initially, the Vice-Chancellor tried to placate the students. He agreed not to let Habib attend a special convocation for Nobel Laureate Abdus Salam (Habib says he has "not attended a single convocation" for many years).

On January 25, the students began a gherao of the Vice-Chancellor. An Emergency Executive Council agreed to hold an inquiry into Habib's interview and ask him not to attend the Dean's office during the inquiry if the students would stop the agitation. But the students refused. On January 31, police moved in and arrested 213 students. All other students were sent home and the university closed sine die.

### HABIB'S VIEWS NOT UNIQUE

Habib's views on student discipline are only one reason

for the campaign against him. For one thing, he is not the only faculty member to express such views. An article appeared, the day after Habib's interview, in another national daily by Anwarul Yaquin, law lecturer at AMU, who commented on the "gradual deterioration in administrative efficiency, academic standards and moral discipline."

In September 1979, the secretary of the AMU Staff Association wrote to President Sanjiva Reddy: "Student discipline and the law and order situation on the campus have been at their lowest ebb during the past five years. This has been mainly due to the inaction of the authorities and the protection given by them to a small number of rowdy elements to such an extent as to encourage them in their nefarious activities."

### WHY HABIB?

Then, why is Irfan Habib being singled out? Partly, because he is in a position to do something about his views. But another reason is that he is a Marxist scholar who has studied his field of specialty objectively and who holds social views that are different from some of the traditionalists. Such scholars have difficulties in most Indian universities - Poona where a scholar was vilified for putting forth unorthodox views about Shivaji, or other places. Aligarh is no exception.

One of the anti-Habib slogans was "Roos ka Naukar Murdabad" (Down with the Servant of Russia). Habib remarked to M.J.Akbar of Sunday magazine that it should have been China instead of Russia since he is a member of CPM and not CPI. Leaving aside the question of Habib's loyalties, the slogan appears to be a clever way to utilize the general anti-Russian sentiment (especially since the occupation of Afghanistan and the belligerent attitude to Pakistan) to attack any progressive person.

Progressives of all sorts have had a hard time at Aligarh. Ten years ago, Zaheda Zaidi, a poet herself and a reader in English, tried to produce a play with women acting in it. She was not allowed to do so.

The first time that women were seen on stage at the university was in 1957, when a cultural organization presented songs; that was when Zakir Hussain was Vice-Chancellor. Some students forced the university to abandon this idea after he finished his term.

An Urdu Reader, Qazi Abdus Sattar, has written a number of books, among them the controversial Dara Shikoh in which the portrayal of Aurangzeb is not at all liked by traditionalists. Sattar got a Padma Shri in 1973 for his contributions to Urdu and writing, but the university librarian does not think his famous book Dara Shikoh good enough to keep in the library.

Thus Habib is not the first progressive to be denounced. One difference may be that he is willing to stay and fight.

(information from Sunday)



# Foreign Students in Quebec Face Another Tuition Hike

(continued from p.1)  
trast, a Canadian student will pay only \$570 for the entire academic year.

With the new fee hike, a foreign student will pay over seven times that paid by their Canadian classmates for the same education.

Foreign students in Ontario, Alberta and three Maritime provinces also pay higher fees than Canadian students.

In Quebec, a differential fee for foreign students was first introduced two years ago, when a foreign student was required to pay three times his/her Canadian counterpart. Now the situation is getting worse.

The announcement by the government was abrupt and with no explanation. With this increase, the Quebec government outstrips every other province in raising tuition for foreign students.

There are approximately 6,000 foreign students in Quebec of whom 4,200 are enrolled in McGill, Concordia and Bishop. A large number are from the third world, South Asia contributing the largest fraction. The discriminatory nature of the fee hike is apparent from the fact that the new clause will not affect students coming from Francophone countries - principally France.

The most obvious consequence of such a drastic fee increase will be a substantial reduction in foreign students in the English-speaking universities of Quebec.

Fearing a decline in the educational standard and quality of students in English colleges, the academic community, including principals and deans, have urged the Quebec government to issue a policy statement with respect to differential fees in Quebec. The government, however, has not even bothered to respond much less explain its policy.

Unlike the concern of academic circles, the news media have often circulated stories justifying discriminatory treatment of foreign students. For example, CTV's W5 program argued that foreign students are a burden on the Canadian taxpayer and deprive Canadian students of their rightful jobs. When CTV was confronted with hard facts showing that their arguments were based on prejudice and not facts, CTV had to apologize publicly for displaying the program.

According to the Canadian

## GOVT BLOWS \$60,000 ON GOLF TOURNEY

India hosted the fourth leg of the Asian Circuit of golf in New Delhi in the middle of March. There were no Indians in the top ten.

The prizes totaled \$60,000. An Indian official said, "Golf has picked up in India over the years and now looks like having a bright future with many private companies contributing generously."

Bureau for International Education, foreign students cost the Canadian taxpayers \$18 million a year whereas they add to the Canadian economy a total of \$63 million a year. This means that at the existing rate, foreign students already pay a net \$45 million a year. Thus, the Quebec government's claim that the new fee hike is needed to make up for the cost of education has no basis. In any case, the new increase can make up only 1% of the total cost. It will, however, add a big burden to foreign students seeking admission. Already, a foreign student has to show a balance of \$4,000-\$6,000 to get a visa. While here, they are not allowed to work even in the university. This has forced many of them to live under extremely hard conditions which are certainly not conducive to the studies for which they have come.

The high fees and the high cost of living in Canada have over the years led to a decline in the number of foreign students seeking admission in Canada. The present fee increase will only further reduce the number of foreign students. The alarming consequence of a decrease in foreign students has made the Student Societies of McGill and Concordia protest this move by the provincial government.

The National Union of Students of Canada, Association Nationale des Etudiants du Quebec (ANEQ), and Regroupement de Associations Etudiants Universitaire (RAEU) have condemned the fee increase. Various student organizations belonging to different ethnic and national groups are already planning protest actions.

In the meantime, many members of the South Asia Peoples' Associations (SAPA) at McGill and Concordia feel that the utmost effort should be made to defeat the government's plan.

Principal David Johnston of McGill said: "This [increase in fees] will have a highly regrettable consequence for all Quebec universities since the diverse backgrounds and experiences of students from other countries broaden the outlook and increase the knowledge and wisdom of Quebec students. Foreign students also provide a link between Quebec and countries around the world, stimulating research, education and cultural understanding both here and abroad."

Despite this widespread opposition, foreign students are not sure if sanity and academic honesty will prevail over the national chauvinism of the Parti Quebecois government of Quebec.



Canadian students at Earlier Protest

## Arsonist Convicted But Charges Reduced

The home of Kuldip Gill in Ladner was firebombed by racist thugs in the early hours of February 11. Four Molotov cocktails were hurled. Although a front window was smashed, the bombs did not get into the house and only an exterior wall was damaged. In the same area of Ladner, on January 3, the house of Gurdev Sidhu was badly burned down by firebombs.

When the Sidhu home was burned down in Ladner, the BC Organization to Fight Racism (BCOFR) told the local police that if it did not catch the arsonists, such attacks would only increase. Within a month, another home has been firebombed. For Kuldip Gill, this was not the first time that his house was targeted. Many times before, his windows were smashed. But the police didn't do anything, despite repeated complaints. After the February 11 fire-bomb attack on his home, Gill told BCOFR members who visited him that he had had enough. He is only waiting to see what

the police would do. Otherwise he is ready to defend his home and his family's lives.

The work of BCOFR on many fronts is beginning to show results. The Delta police was forced to act. They were told in no uncertain terms that people would not tolerate any more attacks on their lives and property; that it is their right to defend themselves by any means necessary.

Within days of the fire-bombing of the Gill home, the police arrested three teenagers: 19-year-old Darrill Bachman, 17-year-old Craig Mousseau, and a juvenile. According to police chief Doug McCleod, who was interviewed by India Now, these youngsters are being charged for arson and face upto 14 years in jail.

On March 11, Craig Mousseau was sentenced to nine months in prison. He had pleaded guilty to a charge of mischief in return for the arson charge being dropped. The other two have not been tried yet.

## CRIME RATE LOW AMONG ASIANS IN ENGLAND

The crime rate among Asians in England is very low, according to a study published under the title, "Asians and Crime: the Bradford Experience."

The reason for this seems to be the strong family and community ties in Asian families.

The Asians in Bradford, a north England multiracial city, commit much less crime than whites despite their higher unemployment.

The adult crime rate among Asians was only one-third that of the non-Asian population, and the juvenile rate just over one half.

The study was conducted by Mawby, principal lecturer in social policy at the Plymouth Polytechnic, and Batta, a senior social worker in Bradford.

## CHHINA, VETERAN GHADAR LEADER, DIES IN AMRITSAR

Achhar Singh Chhina, a noted revolutionary who fought for India's independence, died in Amritsar on March 11. He was 82. He was cremated with full state honors in his village, Harse Chhina.

Chhina came to the US in 1920 for college education. Soon he joined the Ghadar Party in California and was ever since active in the struggle for the country's independence.

## Bank Directors Give Each Other Loans

Finance Minister, R.Venkataraman, admitted in Rajya Sabha on March 17 that the directors of five banks were found to be lending their banks' money to each other. But he refused to reveal the names of the directors.

The banks involved are the Punjab and Sind Bank, the Laksai Commercial Bank, the New Bank of India, the Oriental Bank of Commerce, and the Traders Bank.

Members of Parliament pointed out the findings of the chief judicial magistrate of Delhi against the Punjab and Sind Bank's chairman, Inderjeet Singh Bakshi, and other directors who, according to the court, "appeared to be active partners in the well-conceived conspiracy, forgery and take-over of other persons' property by fraudulent means."

Venkataraman claimed that the Banking Commission Act required him not to reveal the names of the directors. He read out Section 13(1) of the Act as the relevant section.

An MP, who is also a Supreme Court lawyer, said the finance minister "should not shield those who have been found prima facie guilty not only of bank frauds but also criminal acts. The relevant section protects only the honest and decent persons dealing with the banks, not people who commit frauds and other criminal acts."



## No Let-Up in Population Growth Female Sex Ratio Still Lags

India's population is 683.8 million now, according to the 1981 census. The population has gone up by a quarter (24.75%) in the last ten years, showing no change in the rate of population growth compared to 1961-71. Since 1947, the population has doubled.

Fifteen states each have a population of more than 10 million: UP (111 million), Bihar (70), Maharashtra (63), West Bengal (54), Andhra (53), Madhya Pradesh (52), Tamil Nadu (48), Karnataka (37), Rajasthan (34), Gujarat (34), Orissa (26), Kerala (25), Assam (20-estimated), Punjab (17) and Haryana (13 million).

The number of women continues to lag behind the number of men. There are now 935 females to 1000 males, slightly up from 930 in 1971. Only one state, Kerala, has more females than males: 1034 to 1000. The south has somewhat better sex ratios: 982 in Orissa, 975 in Andhra, 987 in Pondicherry, 978 in Tamil Nadu, 982 in Goa, and 963 in Karnataka. Other areas with relatively better sex ratios are Himachal (988), Kashmir (953-estimated), Manipur (972), Meghalaya (956). At the other end are Sikkim (835), Nagaland (867), Haryana (877), Punjab (886), UP (886), Assam (900-estimated), and West Bengal (911). It is generally thought that neglect is the chief reason for the smaller number of females. Many countries have more women than men.

### LITERACY

Literacy rate has gone up from 29.5% in 1971 to 36.2%. Even if all children receive education, the literacy rate can only go up slowly because of

### EDUCATOR DISCUSSES SOCIO-POLITICAL ASPECTS OF EDUCATION

Sister Gladys D'Souza recently toured a number of cities in North America. An educator and author of a number of textbooks for schoolchildren, she spoke to a wide range of people in College Station (Texas), San Francisco, Seattle, Pullman, Vancouver, Montreal, Boston and Bangor.

Sister Gladys D'Souza was particularly concerned with the problem of teaching children from poor families. She believes that the existing education system does not deal with the reality of people's lives, especially poor people's lives. Consequently, it is extremely hard for poor children to become interested in going through the present set-up.

Sister D'Souza believes there is a real need for a new approach that educates people to the reality of their own lives. Existing textbooks are inadequate; new ones have to be written that draw on people's own life-experience to explain and convey whatever is to be taught. She believes that the educational approach as well as textbooks must have an acute sense of social justice.

the large numbers of adult illiterates. But, in fact, the number of illiterates has gone up by 92 million, indicating that even basic literacy is not being provided to that many youngsters.

There are wide interstate variations in literacy. Only one state, again Kerala, with a 69% literacy rate, exceeds 50%. Some union territories also exceed 50%: Mizoram (60%), Goa (56%), Lakshadweep (55%), Pondicherry (54%), and Andaman (51%). New Delhi's literacy is 61% and Chandigarh's, 65%. A number of states have over 40% literacy rate: Maharashtra (47%), Tamil Nadu (46%), Gujarat (44%), Himachal (42%), Nagaland (42%), Manipur (42%), Tripura (42%), Punjab (41%), and West Bengal (41%). At the other end are Rajasthan (24%), Bihar (26%), UP (27%), and MP (28%).

Again, there is a big gap between males and females. Nationally 47% of the males are literate but only 25% of the females. The gap is smallest in Kerala (10% difference), Meghalaya (8%), Nagaland (15%), and Punjab (12%). In all other states, female literacy rate is 20% or more below the male percentage. Thus, in a number of states, a majority of males are literate (Gujarat, Himachal, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and West Bengal), but in only one (Kerala) is it true for females. In some states, not even one in six females is literate: Rajasthan (11%), Bihar (14%), UP (14%) and MP (15%).

The census is yet to take place in Assam and Jammu and Kashmir. In the latter, it will begin on April 20. No date has been set for Assam.

## First Woman Head of UGC

Dr Madhuri R Shah is the new head of the University Grants Commission (UGC). This is the first time a woman educationist has been chosen to head the UGC.

Shah, who is 61, was an education officer in the Bombay Municipal Corporation for 14 years and has been the Vice-Chancellor of Srimathi Nathubai Damodar Thackersey Women's University, Bombay, from 1975.

Improvement of the standards of education and pragmatic reforms in the education system are two areas of interest to her. She wants Education to be in the Concurrent list, meaning under central as well as state jurisdiction, in order to make education uniform and get larger resources from the centre. It will also mean more power for the central government.

## Science Budget Increased

The government has raised its science budget for 1981-82 to about Rs 6,640 million against Rs 5,840 million last year. The department of atomic energy gets the biggest chunk, Rs 3,890 million, Rs 1,447 million go to the Department of Science and Technology and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, and Rs 1,070 million to the Department of Space.

Among new projects are Rs 60 million for a department of environment, Rs 5 million for research on waste recycling and solar energy, and Rs 1 million for a center for science and technology in developing countries.

Part of the allocation for the Department of Atomic Energy is to set up three heavy water plants and a new atomic power station in the western region. The project costs of the Talcher and Kota heavy water plants have gone up sharply. Kota will cost Rs 637 million instead of Rs 195 million. Talcher will cost Rs 570 million instead of Rs 337 million. Rs 243 million will be spent to buy heavy water. The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre will get Rs 366 million for research and development and Rs 238 million for capital projects.

## New Science Advisory Committee

A Science Advisory Committee to the Cabinet (SACC) and a Commission for Additional Sources of Energy (CASE) are being set up in New Delhi.

CASE will have responsibility to plan and implement programs for development of new and renewable sources of energy. It will be headed by the Secretary to the Department of Science and Technology (M.G.K. Menon). Members will be the Secretaries from the Departments of Power and Expenditure, the Director-General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, and the Chairman of Khadi and Village Industries Commission.

SACC will advise the cabinet on science and technology

## 40,000-yr-old Settlement Found in Orissa

Evidence of an ancient stone-age settlement has been found near the confluence of Mahanadi and Tel. Dr Ashok Marathe, lecturer in archeology at Deccan College, Pune, and R.Y. Dundappa, photographer and explorer, found implements belonging to the middle paleolithic period dating back to 40,000 BC. These included sharp-edged weapons like scrapers and burins on the left bank of the confluence and mesolithic tools like stone blades, triangles and other geometrically shaped items.

## Polio Epidemic in "Modern" Madras

An epidemic of infantile paralysis (polio) is on in Madras, one of our more modern cities. At least 40 children have died so far.

Doctors are proposing a massive immunization program but the Health Officer of the city says there is not enough vaccine for all the children in the city. Stocks are being sent to the badly affected parts of the city. How he hopes to confine the epidemic to a part of the city is not clear.

Polio affects about 100,000 children each year in India, leaving most of them crippled. According to a study by the Christian Medical College in Vellore, the incidence is rising. One out of 100 urban infants develops polio with a slightly smaller fraction in the countryside.

What is particularly tragic and indicative of the government's attitude to children's welfare is that polio is not an unavoidable disease. There are two excellent vaccines, one oral and the other injected (Sabin and Salk). The advanced countries have essentially eradicated the disease.

If the Indian government were serious about preventing polio, it would have a total immunization program. Instead, through lack of planning and corruption, only a small fraction of the needed amount is available in any town. The affluent, who have the means and the knowledge, get their children immunized while the poor have to take their chances.

net on science and technology policy and recommend measures to enhance technological self-reliance. It will be headed by the Planning Commission member in charge of science and technology. The list of its members reads like a Who's Who in Indian Academic Bureaucracy: Professors Raja Ramanna, Rais Ahmed, Devendra Lal, C.N.R. Rao, M.M. Sharma, K.P.P. Nambiar, S.Z. Qasim, M.N. Dastur, Nityanand, Obaid Siddiqui, S.R. Vallun, and R.R. Daniel. More will be announced later.

It is too soon to tell whether the two committees will actually do something productive or whether they are simply two more bureaucratic set-ups for the glorification of the Science and Technology Department.

A site uncovered in late February at Manamunda village, 4 km from the famous temple-town Sonepur, is so near the edge of the confluence that whenever the two rivers are in spate they are likely to flood the site. The site has been refilled with earth to protect the monuments against flood damage.

Bones, fossils (of humans and animals), pottery bits and samples of soil and coal were taken in a caravan to Sambalpur to be displayed in the university museum.



## Junoon Is Not Pro-British

Errors and questionable interpretations mar your commendable attempt to review Benegal's *Junoon* in the March 1981 issue.

Unlike your reviewer, many may not perceive *Junoon* as a portrayal of the "passion of an Indian nobleman for a young English girl with 1857 - the year of the First War of Independence - as the backdrop," but rather find it a portrayal of the first war of independence one aspect of which is depicted by the character of the nobleman (Javed Khan).

Contrary to your review, the church scene does not show any massacre of women and children by the Indian soldiers. This is not even incidental. Rather it is an accurate depiction of the high value of Indian fighters in contrast to that of the British who would not have spared even an unborn child to maintain their rule. Moreover, the church scene depicts a historically accurate aspect of the planned 1857 uprising. Despite this, however, the church scene, if it had to be presented, should have been preceded by historical events leading to and visually justifying the killing of the British.

I would not argue with your reviewer's description of the "interpersonal relationships between men and women and between husband and wife" as depicted in the film. What Benegal correctly perceives and should be pointed out is the important role of women in the film and their hatred towards British rule. Also commendable but not mentioned in your review is Benegal's portrayal of the unity and brotherhood between Hindus and Muslims throughout the film.

Perhaps the most unfair comment of your review is that "Benegal appears to be, at best, undecided and, at worst, firmly on the side of the British." Benegal naturally had an Indian audience in mind. However, since the film is shown abroad where many, including some young Indians, may be unaware of Indian

history and of the savagery of British rule in India (and elsewhere), some criticism of the film is justified. But given the fact that that *Junoon* is another important departure from the usual films made in India and depicts almost for the first time a period (1857) which should have been the theme of many a film, Benegal certainly deserves applause.

Yours Truly,  
Bharat Chaudhary  
Montreal

From the Editor:

The reviewer and the letter-writer have totally different images of the opening scene of the film. Sumanta writes that the scene shows Indian soldiers killing British women and children; Bharat Chaudhary says the scene shows nothing of the sort. Unfortunately, I have not seen the film myself. Perhaps, other readers will write in and clarify the matter.

Since no one has mentioned it so far, I might point out that the story is not an Indian original; Benegal adapted it from a Ruskin Bond story. I must say I don't remember Ruskin Bond as anything but a romantic.

I would disagree with Bharat Chaudhary on applauding Benegal simply for making a film about 1857. I did see another film about the same period, *Shatranj ke Khiladi* or *Chess-Players*, by Satyajit Ray. That film was so sympathetic to the British view of bringing order to the feudal chaos of India that I had trouble sitting through the film. In that case, the fact that the film was about a period immediately preceding 1857 (as the post-script titles point out) only made it worse. I came away with the clear impression that at least Satyajit Ray believed sincerely that the British conquest of India was a good thing at that time since Indian feudalism was so backward compared to the British colonialism. So it is not sufficient for Benegal to make a movie about 1857 for us to applaud it.

conversations with women in the villages.

A fourth article, Talat Rehman's "Role of women in the labor force in Pakistan," is a translation from an Urdu journal of an article on women factory workers in Karachi.

All four articles are graphic portraits of women at work and in society in urban and rural South Asia. They reveal the extent of the physical and mental hardships that women undergo when they work; and the complete discrimination against them at the workplace and in society. Effectively, these articles try to cut the layers of mystification that surround the study of women in academic and scientific milieux in the region.

The two articles by co-editor Sucheta Mazumdar, "Socialization of a Hindu middle

## That Is the Problem

Sachidanandan

[Sachidanandan is a revolutionary poet in Kerala. He was arrested last summer for singing the Internationale at a public meeting protesting police brutality. The poem below was published, soon after the Emergency, in CPM's Malayalam journal, *Deshabhimani*. CPM heads the present government in Kerala which arrested Sachidanandan.]

Those who read the newspapers say  
That we can now move about without fear.  
They haven't yet seen the ugly tail of the devil  
Hidden beneath the files and budgets.  
That's the problem.

Those in white shervani's say  
That the New Age is here, when poetry will no more be banned.  
They haven't yet heard the unlettered sigh  
Of those whose poetry has been choked to death.  
That's the problem.

The scribes are celebrating the triumph of democracy  
The priest and the jotedar walk hand in hand  
The police and the judge wink at each other  
The monopolist invites the moneylender to dinner  
A mad woman roams the street, sleepless  
The cadaver and its fly on the pavement  
Plug their ears and turn aside.

The mask is all right. Fine!  
But what about the face?  
Your henchmen have got back their shares. Fine!  
But, what about the people?  
You regained your freedom to write. Fine!  
But, who is to teach the readers their alphabet?  
You have picked up your lost dignity. Fine!  
But, when is the dying child to have his bread?  
That's the problem.

Statistics are still lying  
The ghost is still traveling in disguise.  
Those who dared ask questions are still awaiting trial  
Yet you think the Brahmin's court will  
Measure out justice to the Mahar.  
You hope that Delhi's flatulent durbars  
Will pass Revolution's bill for the hungry Santhal.

The peasants of Haryana, the cobblers of Kanpur,  
The tribals of Birbhum and the miners of Bihar  
Gave you back your democracy.  
What are you going to give them in return?  
A pair of bullocks?  
No, what they demand is the entire land.  
A rise in bonus?  
No, what they demand is the entire factory.  
A piece of slate?  
No, what they demand is the entire culture.  
You offer them dividends  
But where is the capital?  
That's the problem.

A plucked-out pair of bleeding eyes is still watching us  
A whip-scarred back rises before us like a hill.  
A thumb cut off from its hand  
Is still groping for the trigger.

Sir, freedom is no grocery shop  
To be inaugurated by a Mahatmaji,  
closed by a Mataji, and reopened by a Pithaji  
It is the music of the great sky beyond classes  
A death heavier than the Himalayas  
A life deeper than the Pacific.

This, you will never understand  
That's the problem,  
FREEDOM, YES, FREEDOM IS THE PROBLEM.

(translated from Malayalam)

## Special Issue from UCLA on South Asian Women

The first issue of the South Asia Bulletin examines the situation of contemporary South Asian women, according to an announcement by the South Asia Association at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Three articles are based on primary materials gathered by the authors on their research trips to India and Bangladesh. They are Cynthia Holton's "Savitri: Portrait of a Bombay working class woman," based on extensive interviews recorded in 1978-79; Najma Rizvi's "Life cycle of Bangladeshi Muslim women and their role in the economy," which draws on field research conducted by the author for her dissertation; Suvarna Thaker's "Political status of women in rural India: a survey of villages in Gondal, Gujarat," based on interviews and

class Bengali woman," and "Sri Lanka women in society and economy: a review of some recent literature," carry the same themes forward. The first article examines the position of women in the joint family, largely a development of the 19th century, and the complete subordination of women to the "requirements" of this type of family organization, conceived of as a unit of capital accumulation.

The conclusion by the other co-editor, Vasant Kaiwar, attempts to draw the threads together by examining the aims and purposes of much bourgeois scholarship on women in South Asia, and contrasting them with those of the Bulletin, and by highlighting the issues raised by the various authors. There is a fairly extensive statistical appendix.

The South Asia Bulletin is

available from the South Asia Association, 3232 Campbell Hall, University of California, Los Angeles, California 90024. It costs \$1.75 each; the proceeds will be used to bring out subsequent issues of the Bulletin.

## "Savithri" Film OK'd by Court

A judge of the Madras High Court has decided that the Tamil film *Savithri* does not in any way tend to offend the feelings of the Brahmin community or its way of life.

The secretary of the Tamil Nadu Brahmin Association had complained to the court that the film was a deliberate attack on the Brahmin community.

According to Justice S. Padmanabhan, the film highlighted the feelings of a young girl married to a much older man unable to consummate the marriage.



# Canadian Farmworkers Union Holds National Convention

Regulations and demanded that farmworkers be included in all labor laws. Similarly CFU demanded that the Ontario government end legislative discrimination for farmworkers in that province. Presently farmworkers are denied the right to unionize in Ontario.

Another resolution demanded an end to discriminatory unemployment insurance regulations for farmworkers. At present, workers do not often qualify for unemployment insurance which requires 25 consecutive days of employment with the same employer or weekly earnings of \$79.50.

The CFU convention pledged its full support to the BC Organization to Fight Racism, which is presently attempting to get rid of the KKK from British Columbia.

## PUBLIC RALLY

Speaking at a public rally at the close of the convention, CFU President Raj Chouhan appealed to all CFU members and supporters to raise funds for the union's organizing drive. Chouhan said that CFU's budget for 1981 is well over \$100,000.

Paddy Neale, secretary-treasurer of the Vancouver and District Labour Council,

(continued from p.1)



Farmworker Lal Singh Lally makes a point during Canadian Farmworkers Union rally

was warmly received by the audience when he began his speech with "Zindabad." He told the rally, "The Vancouver Labour Council will be there to help if and when you call on us."

The rally was addressed by a number of farmworkers and also by CFU's Ontario representative Sandi Roy.

In a telegram to the convention, Cesar Chavez, president of the United Farmworkers of America, said, "As men and women who know what it takes to struggle and sacrifice to have a union, we applaud the achievements you have made." Chavez will be addressing a CFU fund-raising dinner in Vancouver on April 11.

## Journalist Calls Indira Threat to Democracy

With Indira Gandhi in power, the present and future of democracy in India is something to be seriously concerned about, said N. Ram, Washington correspondent of the Hindu. Ram was speaking to an audience of over 75 people at a meeting organized by IPANA (Montreal) on March 27.

Ram added that it is a matter of recorded history that India has been under preventive detention acts ever since 1947 with nominal interruptions. This trend has steadily increased in India and it took a serious turn in June 1975 when Indira declared a National Emergency.

Ram went on to say that although a crude danger to democracy ended with the death of Sanjay in a plane crash, the return to power of his mother in early 1980 has been accompanied by a revival of many of the old stalwarts of repression. The passing of the National Security Act under which any citizen of India can

be detained without trial poses a serious threat to the future of democratic rights of Indian people. Ram said that curtailment of the working class's right to collective bargaining also constitutes a serious infringement on conventionally accepted norms of democratic rights. He reminded the audience of the manner in which the railway workers' strike of May 1974 was suppressed.

Indira Gandhi's attempts to change the present system into a presidential form of government is fundamentally an attempt to concentrate power in her own hands, according to Ram. Given the authoritarian practices of Gandhi, such a change will only endanger democracy, he added.

Ram gave several examples of the curtailment of democratic rights of Indian people, especially under Indira's rule, and warned that unless systematic efforts are made for the preservation and expansion

## Mangal Pandey

(continued from p.1)

Bengal had secretly joined the planned rebellion. On February 25 they refused to use the new rifles assigned to them. How could British arrogance tolerate the defiance of the Indians? They planned to disarm the 19th regiment. Reinforcement was called from

sion of democratic rights, India will fall under authoritarian rule.

International voice played a useful role in the fight for democracy during the Emergency and is going to play an even more useful role in the future, Ram said. He was optimistic at the promptness and seriousness with which many draconian laws and practices are being opposed by various sections of the people. He went on to say that it is encouraging that such a movement for democracy is more vigorous now than was the case when Emergency was declared in 1975.

Burma. News of the British plan infuriated the soldiers of the 34th regiment, Mangal Pandey among them.

It was March 29, 1857. Soldiers of the 34th regiment were out on parade duty. Mangal Pandey stepped forward and called on his comrades to attack the British officers. The soldiers hesitated for they knew that the planned date for the uprising had not yet come. At this point Major Hughson came forward and ordered that Mangal Pandey be arrested. None of the Indian soldiers came forward to oblige Hughson. Hughson proceeded to personally arrest Pandey. Little did he realize what was about to happen. Mangal Pandey aimed at Hughson. The first shot of the war was fired. Hughson lay dead.

Just as this happened, Lieut. Baugh advanced towards Mangal Pandey to arrest him. Another bullet was fired. The bullet hit the horse and the lieutenant fell on the ground. Pandey took out his sword and killed him. Another British officer came forward and he was about to fire at Pandey when a rifle butt hit him on the head. A comrade of Pandey had come to rescue him. "Dare not touch Mangal Pandey," he shouted.

The soldiers also refused the order of Colonel Wheeler to arrest Pandey. Wheeler went back to the garrison and brought British soldiers. Mangal Pandey did not want to fall into the hands of the British. He drew his rifle and shot himself; he was wounded but not dead. He was arrested and subsequently tried for "mutiny." Various attempts were made during the trial to force Pandey to reveal the names of the organizers of the coming rebellion. A defiant NO was all the British got from Pandey.

Mangal Pandey was sentenced to be hanged to death. But the hangmen in Barrackpore refused to do it. Hangmen had to be brought from outside.

On April 8, 1857, Mangal Pandey was hanged for a crime which many came forward to commit after him - to fight for India's freedom, to drive the British out.

The First War of Independence was lost. But it did not put an end to our fight for independence. The battle went on for another 90 years until in 1947 the British were forced to relinquish their Raj.

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